

Frequently Asked Questions about the Mt. Whitney Lottery updated for 2014

When will the trail be clear of snow? Expect snow in May and June. Snow may cover the trail again in late September or October. When ice or snow is on the trail, winter mountaineering skills, experience and equipment are essential for a safe trip. More information is found in "[Hiking the Mt Whitney Trail](#)".

How do I get the application form? The lottery application is completed online. No snail mail, paper applications are no longer accepted. The application form will appear on the recreation.gov website starting on Feb 1 and will disappear again after March 15.

What is reserved in the lottery? Two types of permits are in the lottery, Mt. Whitney Zone Day Use and Overnight on the Mt. Whitney Trail. Day and overnight are not interchangeable. Descriptions and details about the two permit types are on the [Mt Whitney Lottery / Reservation webpage](#).

What permits for Mt. Whitney are Not reserved in the lottery? If your trip is overnight and you're not going up the Mt Whitney Trail, the trip is not in the lottery. These permits can be reserved online up to 6 months in advance at www.recreation.gov

- Look for **"Inyo National Forest- Wilderness Permits"** to find our list of trails. This list includes trails that do not go to Mt. Whitney. Check the trail description and maps when choosing a trail.
- Look for **"North Fork of Lone Pine Creek trail"** to access the **Mountaineer's Route**, East Face, East Buttress, Mt. Russell and all other climbs in this isolated canyon.
- Look for a **permit type with "Exit Mt Whitney"** for trips that will finish at Whitney Portal, but started on one of the listed trails. Exit via the Mt Whitney trail (Trail Crest to Whitney Portal) has an exit quota that will apply to the date you finish at the Portal. Reserve the entry trail and exit quota all in one reservation. You cannot use a day pass for an exit permit.

Trips starting in **Sequoia, Kings Canyon or Yosemite National Parks**, contact the park where you will begin. The permit issued by the park is valid for the entire trip, including Mt Whitney.

Can I change my Mt Whitney lottery application? Once an application is submitted (cart checked out) you cannot make changes to the information on the application.

- To change the entry date, entry trail or permit type, you must cancel the application and re-apply before March 15. You would pay the \$6 application fee again.
- During the acceptance period you can decline a date if you no longer want it.
- Changes to group size can be made on line after April 1 if space is available.
- Corrections to itinerary or exit date can be done when the permit is issued.
- Reservations cannot be resold or transferred to other groups. No credits. No rain checks.

I'm going on a multi-night trip; do I also need a day use permit for the day we will summit? No, the overnight permit is valid for your summit day.

Do I need a separate reservation for each night of my trip? No, one permit covers your entire trip. You must have an overnight type permit to stay for multiple days. During the acceptance process you indicate how many nights you're staying and your final destination.

I'm not going all the way to the summit, do I still need a permit? Day hiking anywhere in the [Mt. Whitney Zone](#) requires a day use permit. If you are overnight anywhere in the wilderness boundary you need an overnight wilderness permit for the area you are entering.

I want to camp near Lone Pine Lake and start into the Mt Whitney Zone the next day, what permit do I need? Camping near Lone Pine Lake requires a Mt. Whitney trail Overnight Permit. Camping anywhere between the wilderness boundary and the Mt Whitney Zone boundary requires an overnight wilderness permit. Camping near Whitney Portal is restricted to developed campsites.

Does the overnight permit include camping at Whitney Portal Campground? No, the campground is not in the wilderness, make a campground reservation for nights you're staying in the campground.

How do I find out the lottery results? The deadline to claim a date won in the lottery is April 30 (midnight Eastern Time). Log into your account at Recreation.gov after April 1 and look for your lottery application. You must "Accept" and pay the \$15 per person reservation fee or the reservation will be canceled.

What do I need to do to Accept? You will need to verify the group size, complete some trip information and pay the \$15 per person reservation fee to claim your reservation.

- Itinerary: For overnight trips, complete your Exit Date and Exit Trail. **John Muir trail** hikers should indicate the final destination date and trail for the permit to include the entire trip.
- Verify group size: You can accept for a smaller number of people. If space is available, you can increase the group size. The reservation fee of \$15 per person will apply for the number of people accepted and must be paid to complete the acceptance process. 14 days before the trip you will need to verify the final group size again.
- Once you have checked out the cart and accepted a reservation, there is no refund. Reduced group size cannot be restored once the cart is checked out.

How do I get the permit? You must check in at the visitor center (near Lone Pine, CA. 93545) to pick up the permit. No shows will be canceled and given away to other groups. No show deadline for Day Use permit is noon, one day before the hike. Overnight permit deadline is 10:00am on the entry date. If you complete the online group size confirmation one or two weeks before the trip, the permit will be saved until close of business on the entry date. [Permit Pickup Instructions](#).

What is the exit trail? If you are coming down on the Mt Whitney trail to end your trip at Whitney Portal, select "Mt. Whitney Trail". John Muir Trail hikers going through to Yosemite, indicate if you will finish at "Happy Isles- Yosemite" or "Tuolumne Meadows- Yosemite". Section hikers or trans-sierra trips, indicate your final destination and exit date so the permit is valid for your entire trip.

Are trips sponsored by an organization or non profit reserved in the lottery? Organizations or commercial groups must contact the wilderness permit office before applying for a Mt. Whitney Permit. Schools and non profit organizations may need a special use permit. Reserving a permit in the lottery does not guarantee approval. Commercial use of the Mt. Whitney trail and Trail Crest exit require special approval, so start planning well before the trip.

Still Have Wilderness Permit Questions?

For wilderness information or reservation assistance call Inyo National Forest Wilderness Permit Office:

(760) 873-2483

Phone line open 8am to 4:30

winter schedule- closed on weekends and holidays.

May 15 to October 15- open every day.